## Wild Edible Meal

I have used wild edibles in my classroom at school, with my Girl Scout troop and as a workshop theme.

The following menu can be acquired rather easily and prepared with satisfactory results.

Soup: Watercress, Sorrel or Lamb's Quarters

Fritters: Elderberry, Queen Anne's Lace or Purslane

Game Fondue: Duck, Dove, Crayfish

Vegetables: Cattail shoots and heads, Catbrier tendrils, Fairy Spuds

Salad: Greens combinations

Bread: Reindeer lichen, clover or dandelion

Tea: Indian lemonade

Dessert: Mint wafer, berries in season

serves 12

This menu should not be attempted unless you are acquainted with the edibles and recognize poisonous plants that resemble edible ones. Also be aware that the energy required to forage is immense.

## Soup a la Weed

12 cups milk
1½ T salt
3 cups chopped watercress, sorrel or lamb's quarters
2 T onion (if wild use 1 T)
½ cup flour
3 T butter

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Boil the wild edible for a couple of minutes and drain. Heat the milk, onion, butter, salt and greens, adding the flour to thicken. Heat but do not allow mixture to come to a boil. Serve with a dab of butter and a fresh sprig of greenery on top.

# **Foraged Fritters**

2 cups complete pancake mix
1½ cups water
12 sprigs of elderberry flower heads, Queen Anne's Lace or Purslane

Dip the sprig in the pancake batter and fry. Roll the flower heads in lemon or orange juice and powdered sugar. Add butter, salt and pepper to the purslane.

#### Game Fondue

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## Duck a la Mac Johnson

4 ducks (6 if you're hearty eaters)
3 packages of brown and wild rice combined
8 T butter
Mushrooms, 1 qt. fresh or 2 cans
Bottle Worcestershire sauce

Cut meat into pieces the size of the first joint of your little finger. Saute in margarine. When browned, add an equal amount of cut-up mushrooms and Worcestershire sauce equal to the amount of margarine. Put a lid over the meat and mushrooms to simmer and steam.

Prepare the rice. It takes about 25 minutes for the rice to cook, so get it started before preparing your duck. This way, when the meat is done the rice will be, too.

Mac suggests that you "raise the lid occasionally and sniff the duck-mushroom mix to prep your innards. When the half hour is up, drain the rice and serve. Contrary to gourmet instructions, a little Rhine wine goes well. Don't dawdle; it's best hot."

# Crayfish Fondue

12 crawdads 1 quart water Butter or shrimp sauce

First locate a stream, identify and catch crawdads behind the pincers. Note that they swim backwards very quickly! Prepare the catch as you would lobster by placing crawdad live in boiling water for 5 minutes. Shell out tail meat and dip in butter or shrimp sauce. You'll be looking for more!

To fully appreciate this recipe, see Missouri Conservationist, September, 1978.

Dove breasts (emergency substitute: quail, chicken, turkey)

10 cups rainwater

2 T butter

8 chicken bouillon cubes

2 cups hot rainwater

4 t salt

1/4 t pepper

8 T chopped onion

1 t thyme

1 t rosemary

Gather rainwater on the day you go duck hunting!

Brown dove breasts in butter for 10 minutes. Add all the ingredients from bouillon cubes down through rosemary and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove doves and add the following ingredients:

4 cups sour cream

2 cups white wine

1/4 cup flour to thicken

Heat, add doves and serve with either wild rice and mushrooms or noodles and mushrooms (cooked in the remaining cups of rainwater, of course!)

## Wild Vegetables

#### Cattails

Cattail shoots (early spring) Cattail heads (early summer) 24 shoots or heads Salted water Butter

Boil three minutes in water, remove and eat heads like corn on the cob; shoots are an asparagus-like vegetable. Save some of the shoots to be eaten raw in a salad.

### Cathrier Shoots

24 tendrils Salted water to cover Butter

Boil for three minutes, drain and season with butter.

# Fairy Spuds

36 fairy spuds (early spring — early summer) Salted water Butter, salt, pepper

Spring beauties grow in abundance. About four inches below the edible flower and leaf structure grows a tiny potato-like tuber called fairy spuds. A group can generally locate several patches from which to dig. The taste is rather musty but the excitement of locating a wild potato is remembered even if the item isn't well eaten.

# Collect any of the following:

Cattail shoots
Chickweed
Clover, small amount
Dandelion leaves, young
Lamb's quarters, large amount
Peppergrass
Plantain, young leaves
Sorrel, small amount
Spring beauty, leaves and flowers
Watercress
Wild grape leaves and tendrils
Wild onion
Violet leaves and flowers

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Be prepared for a lengthy time washing the salad. I find an oil-vinegar dressing goes well with the wildings.

Wild Drink

Indian Lemonade

6 large heads of sumac 1 gallon water Sugar to taste

Collect the heads of the upright, red-berried sumac. Mash berries in water and continue stirring and bruising the berries for several minutes. Strain off the berries and you have a pinkish, sour drink reportedly made by Indians. This is also good served as a hot beverage.

### **Wild Edible Biscuits**

2 cups biscuit mix
½ cup water
½ cup dried reindeer lichen
or
½ cup dried red clover blossoms
or
½ cup dandelion blossoms, all green removed

The reindeer lichen or red clover could be collected at school and dried for the trip. Dandelion blossoms might be gathered on site. Prepare biscuit mix, add wild edible, pat into biscuit shapes and bake.

### **Mint Wafer Dessert**

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36-48 mint leaves 2 egg whites stiffly beaten with ¼ t cream of tartar ½ cup sugar

Dip leaves in egg white batter. Roll in sugar and allow to dry on a tray, table or flat rock—in sunshine if possible.

Reap your harvest and enjoy!